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ABSTRACT

Conditions prevailing in the world of work, and the corresponding behavior of adults to seek further education as a means of adjusting to these conditions, has provided the climate for the emergence of the Continuing Education Unit (CEU). Adults today need a kind of accreditation that recognizes both their continuing pursuit of competence and their current level of ability. Activities outside of and supplemental to more traditional curriculum programs provide the kind of learning opportunity needed and constitute the present major form of continuing education. The development of the CEU and pilot projects in its use were the result of a task force study of the feasibility of a uniform unit of measurement for continuing education activities. The CEU was formally recognized by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools in its revised Standard Nine. In response to confusion over the implications of Standard Nine and the CEU concept, a series of statements clarified the CEU and the implications of Standard Nine on several levels. The use of the unit is expected to spread. (Author/AG)

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THE CONTINUING EDUCATION UNIT

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THE CONTINUING EDUCATION UNIT...

An innovation in adult education designed to recognize and record individual and institutional participation in non-traditional studies and special activities.

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Chapter Four

INNOVATIVE AND RELEVANT ISSUES

The Role of the CEU in Adult Education

Introduction

The Continuing Education Unit (CEU) is today's expression of the innovative and evolving field of adult education.

Traditionally, institutional requirements provided the basis for student admission, achievement, and graduation from institutions of higher learning. Formerly, the youthful student, as a highly qualified and selected consumer, was programmed to become a highly desirable product -- the educated adult.

Conditions prevailing in the world of work, and the corresponding behavior of adults to seek further education as a means of adjusting to these conditions, has provided the climate for the emergence of the CEU (Continuing Education Unit). The student now more often is a self-selecting adult. Often, as a practicing professional in need of new skills, he assumes the role of producer when he confers with institutional administrators to design and plan his innovative program.

Moreover, forces in society stemming from technology and from trends toward a more humane philosophy have affected changes in both the form and content of education; institutions now recognize that education is a life-long process, and that the education of the "educated adult" is never complete. Consequently there are many new programs and program innovations in the area of adult and continuing

education.

Beginning with the sixties, institutions of higher education, including community colleges, technical institutes, and vocational centers, began to respond rather radically to the personal and vocational needs of students. Today, especially in the South, more and more institutions are initiating non-competetive, self-pacing, independent and individualized programs which focus on the individuality, creativeness, and self-reliance of the student. More than a thousand new community colleges, technical institutes, and vocational centers have been created in the past thirteen years to meet the educational needs of all students who reside within a 50 mile commuting distance from the school. These schools are mandated to implement the philosophy of the right of all citizens to educational opportunities which assist in the increase of personal or individual capability.

Although new institutions with new curriculum and degree programs are geared to the vocational needs and interests of the communities they serve, more often than not, they still cling to traditional administrative practices such as the practice of making adult and non-curriculum programs "self-supporting," while at the same time often offering the same courses through curriculum programs supported by the institution. Adult education as a function is generally rated and operationalized as a low priority. Recognition for continuing education pursuits both on the individual and the institutional level is less than adequate to meet the needs of adults.

Continuing Education and Adult Needs

Adults in today's rapidly changing world need to update themselves constantly to stay abreast. They need to retrain themselves three, four, or more times to remain occupationally active. Rather than amass credits and higher degrees to attest their academic achievement, they need a kind of accreditation that recognizes both their continuing pursuit of competence and their current level of ability, not so much of where they got it, but that they got it. Additionally, many organizations, professional associations, government agencies, labor unions, and other institutions require their members to participate in staff development and/or continuing education activities. These same organizations often provide the needed training through their own staff development departments or in conjunction with nearby community colleges, technical institutions, or vocational centers. This pattern of special programs and activities is developing partly because the form and structure of traditional programs administered and derived in a traditional academic environment are inappropriate for adult learning. These special programs and activities, outside and supplemental to the more traditional curriculum programs, take the form of short courses, conferences, institutes, seminars, colloquia, workshops, foreign travel and study, independent study, media instruction and others. They occur under various sponsors, schedules, times and places. They match learning needs with psychological principles of adult learning theory. These special activities constitute the present major form of continuing education.

Background of CEU

With the advent and recent surge of participation in continuing education non-credit, non-traditional program offering has come the need for a system of recognizing, identifying, measuring, and rewarding efforts in these activities. Toward this end a conference was held in Washington in 1968 under joint sponsorship of the National University Extension Association, the American Association of Collegiate Registrars and Admission Officers, the U.S. Civil Service Commission and the U.S. Office of Education.

A National Task Force, represented by members from this group, was formed to study the feasibility and implementation of a uniform unit of measurement that would recognize and record participation in special activities. The Task Force developed a proposal for a unit of measurement that could be field-tested and that would promote general acceptance of the concept. As a result of that study, the CEU was created and defined. According to the definition, one CEU represents "ten contact hours of participation in an organized continuing education experience under responsible sponsorship, capable direction, and qualified instruction."

Pilot projects were initiated at a number of universities, proprietory education institutions, business concerns that provided substantial programs in continuing education, government agencies involved in upgrading and development of individuals, professional societies and other organizations.

Standard Nine

Consequently, the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools (SACS) formally recognized (1) the status and value of special activities, and (2) the CEU as a standardized unit of measurement of participation in these activities by adopting a revised Standard Nine in December, 1971. By this action, SACS is seeking to encourage the development of such programs and, according to J. K. Williams, President of Texas A & M University and Chairman of the Association's Commission on Colleges, is seeking to exert guidance and quality control over them.

The revised Standard Nine mandates the use of the CEU, defined earlier as the basic unit of measurement for (1) institutional offerings of non-credit programs and (2) an individual's participation in those offerings. The standard is part of the criteria used by SACS to accredit all schools and institutions in the South, and to review periodically the status of those previously accredited.

Robert L. Jacobson reports that similar action by collegiate accrediting bodies in other regions is forthcoming. A federation of those agencies is currently working toward developing some common procedures; thus broadening the general acceptance and transferability of CEU's earned and accumulated by any individual.

As mandated, the CEU is both a record-keeping system and a quality control system. Some programs, by their nature and purpose, are excluded from recognition as CEU programs through criteria stated in Standard Nine. These excluding criteria are:

1. Any program carrying academic credit, either secondary or postsecondary.

2. Programs leading to high school equivalency certificates or diplomas.

3. Organizational orientation training programs.

4. Short duration programs only casually related to any specific upgrading purpose or goal.

One of the major purposes of revised Standard Nine is the liberalization of an institution's capacity to provide quality instruction according to the educational needs of its constituency. The requirements regarding the awarding of CEU's focus on three sets of conditions for program offerings, (1) organization, (2) instruction, and (3) records. Whereas a variety of continuing education activities is sponsored by area vocational centers, CEU courses must meet the following criteria:

1. The activity will be sponsored, CEU's determined and faculty personnel approved by the appropriate administrative unit or sponsoring agency.

2. The amount of CEU's for any course shall be determined prior to the course offering announcement.

3. In the pre-planning sessions, there is active involvement by the target population, appropriate instructional personnel, and representation by the administrative unit and sponsoring agency.

4. There is articulated activity description, an identification of the target population, rationale, educational need (s), objectives, sequential outline of the program, and a vehicle for evaluation.

5. Each participant duly registers for CEU by completing an appropriate registration form.

6. A permanent record must be maintained for each student.

7. The local administrative responsibility will rest with the appropriate local continuing education administrator.

Regional Implementation

Already, three states, Georgia, Virginia, and Florida, have developed implementation plans and procedures for a statewide record keeping system. Pilot projects have been designated to operationalize Standard Nine. Other states, such as Alabama, Texas, and North Carolina, have established Task Forces or steering Committees to develop guidelines for implementation. However, a great deal of confusion exists regarding the use of the CEU.

Problems

Top administrators, student personnel officers, and Continuing Education Directors are not fully aware of the implications of Standard Nine and the CEU concept. Many feel pressed to initiate implementation activities at the local level, but they are unable to discuss seriously the program criteria or the resources needed. Due to lack of knowledge, some responsible staff do not understand the purpose, role, and rationale supporting the use of the CEU. They are eager to resist efforts of others of their staff who are engaged in planning activities necessary for implementation. Lack of knowledge, feelings of threat, active resistance and some confusion have been expressed in response to requests for reactions to proposed guidelines. As one administrator said, "In evaluating the need for such a program...we can find only a few cases where it might enhance the existing continuing education program." Another, "...do not have the staff required to implement the system as described."

While many do not openly express concern over anticipated problems at the local level, nevertheless, they react cautiously when asked to react to a proposed state system of implementation. Some feel that in the event a state system were to be adopted, it should be optional to the local institution. Most problems mentioned are related to complications of record keeping, equipment, data collection, registration, and adequate staff.

At a recent meeting in North Carolina, when adult education directors discussed Standard Nine and the use of the CEU, a number of questions were asked concerning basic interpretations of both the role of the CEU and the criteria for awarding CEU's: What is the purpose and value to the student? What records are required? How shall records be kept? What new forms are needed? What will it cost? Who is responsible? Which programs qualify? How are CEU's to be determined? What are the implications for my institution?

Interpretations

Drawing upon the National Task Force Interim Statement, October, 1970, and policies described in Standards of The College Delegate Assembly of SACS, December, 1971, the following statements are appropriate to these and similar questions.

Purpose and Value of the CEU -- The adult student needs to be able to accumulate, update, and transfer his record on continuing education throughout life as he faces a succession of hurdles with respect to maintaining or

or increasing proficiency in his career or in making progress toward his personal educational goals.

The CEU will facilitate communication about continuing education from one person to another, from one institution to another, from employee to employer, from one area of the country to another and from one time period to another.

Recordkeeping Requirements -- The institution is responsible for establishing and maintaining a permanent record of all CEU's awarded. Records are to be available on a permanent basis for purposes of being responsive to requests from employers or certifying organizations. Information to be recorded includes (See Figure 1):

Name of individual student
Social Security number
Title of course or program
Course description and level of instruction
Starting and ending dates of activity
Location of activity
Format of activity
Number of CEU's awarded
Student performance evaluation
Name of instructor
Cooperating sponsor

Recording System -- The system of recording units for participants should be in accordance with the current system of permanent records in use at the institution. At the discretion of the institution, a separate and parallel system can be maintained.

Programs that Qualify -- CEU activities should be described in terms of audience,

ANYWHERE AREA VOCATIONAL CENTER
Anywhere, South Carolina

Please print: CONTINUING EDUCATION APPLICATION class code _____

Name _____
last first initial

Address _____

City _____

Social Security _____

Telephone _____
home

_____
office

Course Title _____

Contact Hours _____

Class Location _____

Instructor Name _____

Sex ( ) M ( ) F

Marital Status ( ) S ( ) M

Race _____

Date of Birth _____

Occupation _____

Highest Grade Completed _____

FOR INSTRUCTOR USE ONLY

Beginning date____ Ending date____

Final Grade _____

_____
Instructor's Signature

C.E. Units _____

Tuition Cost _____

Est. (Personal)
Student Cost _____

Figure 1. A sample record form. This form is a two-part pressure-sensitive carbon record. The top part, of thin white paper, is completed by the student at the time of class registration. It is held by the teacher until the end of the program. At this time the "Instructor Use Only" section is completed and the student receives the top part. The bottom part, an identical form on yellow cardboard, is retained by the institution to be filed as part of the student's permanent record.

purpose, format, content, duration, teaching staff, course prerequisites and level of instruction. This essential information should be maintained in condensed form in the permanent records of the institution. Continuing education programs which are intensive technical and professional courses, in-service training programs, courses that serve for certificate or licensing requirements, occupational skill upgrading courses, liberal education programs, paraprofessional training programs, and other vocational training programs, either in-service or in preparation for job-entry positions are examples of programs eligible for CEU's.

Amount of CEU's to be Awarded -- The number of CEU's awarded is to be determined by considering the number of contact hours in a formal learning situation and evaluating other experiences connected with the program. The decimal system allows the records to reflect the number of CEU's to be awarded, based on contact hours, e.g., 1.5 CEU, 2.4 CEU, etc. A normal one-week short course usually approximates 30 contact hours of participation and would normally be awarded 3.0 CEU. A two-day program seldom involves more than 10 to 12 contact hours and would be awarded 1.0 to 1.2 CEU.

Implications of Standard Nine

1. Administration and Organization. All schools are expected to engage in special activities. These are to be defined clearly and understood by the total institution. Appropriate organizational structure and administrative processes must be provided, including a designated administrative officer responsible for implementing the activities.

Policies and regulations for the program are to be formulated in conjunction with and as part of institution-wide administrative and academic advisory groups.

2. Financial. There must be a clearly identifiable budget for continuing education activities; one that is consistent with institutional policy for support of all divisions within the total institution. All activities recognized by CEU's should be determined on the basis of community need. Necessary financial resources must be available and committed to support the CEU activities of the institution.

3. Faculty. Provision of an adequote and qualified faculty and staff to support the CEU courses is essential to maintaining the academic quality of the institution. Faculty and staff members in continuing education should be accorded the same recognition and benefits as other faculty and staff members of the institution. All who teach must be competent in the fields in which they teach, attested by advanced study and appropriate graduate degrees; or by extensive work experience or professional practice.

4. Students. Recognition that the adult student is different from the regular full-time student must be provided through counseling and other student services appropriate to adult behaviors. These services are to be developed cooperatively by the administrative unit for continuing education with other appropriate units of the institution.

Policies should be developed for admissions, registration procedures, counseling and guidance services, and records. The characteristics of these policies should be directly related to the nature, character, and need of the adult student.

5. Operationally Separate Units. Operationally separate units such as centers or learning laboratories offering CEU programs must have designated staff, appropriate resources, and must adhere to all institutional procedures. Arrangements must be made to provide necessary resources.

6. Conferences and Institutes. Conferences and institutes and their many variations are an important part of continuing education activities. For purposes of identification and clarification, the following categories and definitions are recommended:

   a. Conference: A general type of meeting usually of one or more day's duration, having a central theme, but is often loosely structured to cover a wide range of topics. The emphasis is on prepared presentations by authoritative speakers. Small group discussion sessions are often a related activity.

   b. Institute: Similar to a conference, but more tightly structured to provide a more systematic development of the central theme. Emphasis is on providing instruction in principles and techniques. Participants usually already have some competence in the field

of interest.

c. Short Course: A sequential offering, as a rule, under a single instructor, meeting on a regular basis for a stipulated number of class sessions over a short period of time (e.g., one to three weeks). Quizzes and examinations may be given depending upon the determination of requirements. The non-credit course as a public service type course may resemble the credit course in everything but the awarding of credit.

d. Workshop: Usually conducted over a period of one or more days. The distinguishing feature of the workshop is that it combines instruction with laboratory or experiential activity for the participants. The emphasis is on skill training.

e. Seminar: A small group of people with the primary emphasis on discussion under a leader or resource person or persons, which may range from a one-time offering, to several days, or to an entire semester.

f. Special Training Program. A skill program which offers a combination of instruction and practice. The approach is usually on an individualized basis.

7. Media Instruction. Instruction offered in continuing education through any form of television, radio, computer assisted instruction, telewriter, tele-lecture and other media are appropriate for CEU

awards when they meet the specified criteria for qualifying programs.

The Future of Adult Education

Many educational leaders are already forecasting greater changes in institutional attitudes and practices related to special activities for adult education as a consequent to Standard Nine and the use of the CEU.

Grover J. Andrews, SACS staff member responsible for much of the background study supporting revised Standard Nine, predicts that the way is open now for Southern institutions to "provide just about any kind" of program in non-traditional and continuing education. An individual's participation in these activities will be recorded by means of a standardized unit of measurement. The use of this unit is likely to grow as all institutions, agencies, and organizations become more committed to community service and the continuing need of adults for learning experiences.

Edgar J. Boone, President of the Adult Education Association, advocates equal emphasis to special activities by academic institutions as that given to resident teaching and research.

Robert L. Jacobson reports that SACS has created a new agency, the Commission on Occupation Institutions, to accredit non-profit postsecondary institutions offering vocational and technical education but not offering degrees.

Bob C. Childers, executive secretary of the Commission, says that the purpose of this agency is to improve educational opportunities in these fields and to give them "equal status in the academic community."

Vocational educators will now have voting privileges in SACS activities. The new agency will work in conjunction with business and industry. It is expected that students will enroll more readily in newly accredited vocational schools and centers, and thus, relieve two and four year institutions of enrollment pressures.

Other major changes are likely to occur in other areas of continuing education. These will affect the professional training of adult educators, curriculum specialists, adult counselors, and registrars. When state-wide record keeping systems become established, the vehicle for communication linkages between and among insitutions will be established. It seems likely that the quality of instruction will improve as well as faculty status, planning involvement and salaries. Financial support and public sentiment regarding easy access to life-long learning opportunities should change. And finally, there should be changes in the scope of cooperative ventures between all organizations concerned with adult personal and vocational capabilities, including government, labor, higher education and the professions.

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